

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02155 072141Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----072144Z 061988 /62
O 072058Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 305

S E C R E T BOGOTA 2155

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, CASC, SOCI, CO
SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN GUSTAVIO CURTIS
SITREP 27

1. ON MARCH 7, CONTROL RISKS NEGOTIATOR JOE SMITH MET WITH RSO AT FORMER'S REQUEST. SMITH STATED THAT A CLOSE FRIEND OF MRS. CURTIS RECEIVED ON FIRDAY, MARCH 4, TWO LETTERS FROM KIDNAPPERS ADDRESSED TO MRS. CURTIS.
2. THE FIRST LETTER INDICATED KIDNAPPERS WANTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH MRS. CURTIS IN ORDER TO DISCUSS MATTERS CONCERNING HER HUSBAND. THE LETTER WENT ON THAT IF MRS. CURTIS IS IN AGREEMENT WITH KIDNAPPERS IN COMMUNICATING WITH THEM, SHE WOULD PLACE AN AD IN "EL TIEMPO" ABOUT A FARM FOR SALE IN FUSUGASUGA USING THE TELEPHONE NUMBER GIVEN AS CODE AND PLACING A SECOND NUMBER WHERE SHE CAN BE CONTACTED.
3. THE SECOND LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 27 APPARENTLY WRITTEN TO MRS. CURTIS FROM HER HUSBAND REQUESTS SHE PUT PRESSURE ON BEATRICE FOODS THROUGH EMILIO GRUN, OTHER KEY INDUSTRIAS GRAN COLOMBIA EXECUTIVES, LONGTIME EMPLOYEES, LOCAL DISTRIBUTORS AND COMPANY UNION IN FORM OF LETTERS, TELEGRAMS AND TELEPHONE CALLS TO
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COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS AND EFFECT CURTIS' RELEASE. IN THE LETTER, CURTIS GOES ON TO SAY THAT HE IS SICK AND IN NEED OF MEDICAL ATTENTION AND THAT HE WONDERS WHY THE COMPANY HAS ABANDONED HIM.

4. ACCORDING TO SMITH, MRS. CURTIS PLACED THE AD REQUESTED BY KIDNAPPERS PRIOR TO ADVISING NEGOTIATOR OF

RECEIPT OF LETTERS AND HAS GIVEN HER HOME PHONE AS THE NUMBER TO BE CALLED.

5. SMITH FURTHER ADVISED THAT DAS-CAES CHIEF MAJOR HERNANDEZ (WHO HAS NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT) IS SETTING UP A MEETING BETWEEN SMITH AND A GENERAL ARMANDO OREJUELA ESCOBAR, MILITARY COMMANDER OF TACTICAL UNITS IN BOGOTA AREA, AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS THE CASE. HERNANDEZ ALSO TOLD SMITH THAT, BASED ON A VOICE ANALYSIS OF TAPED CONVERSATIONS WITH KIDNAPPERS, HE BELIEVES MAN NAMED ALI, WHO HAS BEEN MAKING CALLS, IS TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. HERNANDEZ FURTHER STATED THAT DAS BELIEVES THE CURTIS KIDNAPPERS ARE SAME ORGANIZATION THAT KIDNAPPED SEARS EXECUTIVE, DONALD COOPER, ALTHOUGH NO PROOF WAS OFFERED BY HERNANDEZ.

6. ARTICLE IN MARCH 6 SUNDAY ISSUE OF "EL ESPARIO" REPORTED CURTIS IS BEING TRIED BY ONE OF GUERRILLA GROUPS ACTIVE IN COLOMBIA SOLELY BECAUSE HE IS AN AMERICAN. ARTICLE APPEARS TO US TO BE PURELY SPECULATIVE. THERE HAS BEEN NO EVIDENCE CURTIS WAS KIDNAPPED BY ANY OF GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN COLOMBIA.
DREXLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BUSINESSMEN, KIDNAPPING, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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